(c) whether it is also a fact that population of vultures in the country is declining sharply due to a bacteria called 'Harnolytic-a-Kbff and these vultures are on the verge of extinction;

(d) if so, whether Government would contemplate any effective steps to save vultures from extinction; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) No Sir. No such reports have been received.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No Sir. The decline in vultures has been attributed mainly to the veterinary drug diclofenac present in the carcasses of cattle on which the vultures feed. Out of the vultures found in India, the decline in population of three species namely Slender Billed, White Backed and Long Billed is a cause of global concern.

(d) and (e) The issue of decline in population of vultures in the country was discussed in the meeting of the National Board for Wildlife in 2005 wherein it was recommended that the veterinary drug diclofenac should be banned. Accordingly the Ministry of Environment and Forests has taken up the matter with the concerned Ministries and organizations to place a ban on diclofenac. Vulture conservation and breeding centres have been established at Pinjore, Haryana and Buxa, West Bengal in 2001 and 2005 respectively. Education and awareness campaigns about the important role of vultures in our ecosystem have been strengthened.

Death of birds

1992. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR:
SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that more than 300 birds belonging to the Okhla Bird Sanctuary were found floating dead in the River Yamuna recently;

(b) whether it is a fact that most of the dead birds are Shoveller ducks which migrate from Russia and Northern China;

(c) whether Government have done any investigations in this regard;

(d) if so, the action proposed; and

(e) the steps taken by Government to avoid recurrence of such incidence in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) As reported by Government of Uttar Pradesh, fifty three birds were found dead in February, 2006 in Okhla Bird Sanctuary.

(b) The details of species found dead, including migratory birds, are placed at Statement (See below).

(c) and (d) Samples of dead birds sent to the High Security Animal Disease Laboratory, Bhopal have tested negative for avian influenza. Three persons were caught fishing in the area using poisonous baits and have been arrested under the relevant provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1072. The death of the birds is attributed to these poisonous baits, since dead fishes were also found along with the dead birds.

(e) Vigil has been stepped up in the area and all visitors are being checked to prevent recurrence of such incidents.

Statement

The details of species found dead

No.	Name of Species	Numbers found dead
1	Shoveller	43
2	Gulls	02
3	Cormorant	02
4	Little Egret	01
5	Common Teal	05
	TOTAL:	53